

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4468

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UR, US
SUBJECT: MOSCOW'S REFUSENIKS DEPRESSED IN WAKE OF SECRETARY'S
VISIT

REF: (A) MOSCOW 4362, (B) MOSCOW 3000

1. SUMMARY. MOSCOW'S REFUSENIKS ARE DEPRESSED BOTH BY THE LACK OF RESULTS FROM THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND BY THE NEGATIVE SOVIET TONE CONCERNING IT. THEY FEAR THAT ANY WORSENING OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS HAS AN IMMEDIATE AND NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEM AND THEIR PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. MOSCOW'S REFUSENIKS TEND TO SEE ALL EVENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. THEIR INTEREST IN SALT OR MBFR DEPENDS MUCH LESS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF SUCH NEGOTIATIONS THAN ON WHETHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THESE AREAS ARE LIKELY TO IMPEDE OR IMPROVE THEIR CHANCES OF RECEIVING EXIT PERMISSION. OUR SOURCES SEE THE SOVIET REJECTION OF U.S. SALT PROPOSALS AS PRESAGING A HARDER LINE GENERALLY IN SOVIET POLICY TOWARD THE U.S., THUS AS DECREASING THEIR CHANCES OF LEAVING THE SOVIET UNION. THEY ANTICIPATE THAT A CHILL IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES.
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 04468 041520Z

3. MOST OF OUR SOURCES SAW THE HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET ATTENTION DEVOTED TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT (TWO MEETINGS WITH BREZHNEV, THE GROMYKO PRESS CONFERENCE) AS A BAD SIGN IF THERE WAS IN FACT NO SOVIET INTENTION TO MOVE IN AREAS IMPORTANT TO THE U.S. FOR TWO SOURCES, THE BREZHNEV PARTICIPATION AMOUNTS TO HIGH-LEVEL UNDERSCORING OF SOVIET

DISPLEASURE. ONE SOURCE WENT FURTHER AND LINKED THE PRE-VISIT PRESS STATEMENTS (AND BREZHNEV'S TRADE UNION SPEECH) ABOUT U.S. INTERFERENCE IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS WITH THE RIGID SOVIET POSITION (AS HE UNDERSTOOD IT) ON THE DISARMAMENT SUBJECTS DISCUSSED IN THE U.S.-SOVIET TALKS.

4. SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:

--EVEN VIKTOR BRAYLOVSKIY, WHO IS SOMETHING OF A CON-
GENITAL OPTIMIST, WOULD NOT SAY MORE THAN THAT IT WAS
TOO EARLY TO BE SURE THAT THE VISIT HAD GONE BADLY, AND
THAT THE REFUSENIKS WERE LESS LIKELY TO GET OUT AS A RE-
SULT OF THE TALKS.

--VLADIMIR SLEPAK, HOWEVER, SEES ONLY GLOOM. HE TELLS
US THAT YOSIF BEGUN'S WIFE WAS TOLD THE DAY AFTER THE
SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE THAT HER HUSBAND (ARRESTED AFTER
TRYING TO GET INTO THE EMBASSY, REFTEL B) WAS TO BE TRIED
ON PARISITISM CHARGES. SLEPAK SEES THE TIMING AS A "DE-
LIBERATE AFFRONT" TO THE USG. SLEPAK SAYS THAT THE
REITERATION OF THE RIGID KREMLIN POSITION, AND THE TONE
OF INJURED INNOCENCE THAT GROMYKO ASSUMED IN HIS PRESS
CONFERENCE, WERE DESIGNED TO GET ACROSS THE MESSAGE THAT
THE SOVIETS WERE WAITING FOR MORE CONCESSIONS BY WASHINGTON.

--SEVERAL OF THE "ORDINARY" REFUSENIKS, WHO WERE
GUESTS AT A SEDER ATTENDED BY AN EMBOFF, FELT THAT THE
VISIT HAD NOT OF ITSELF REDUCED THEIR CHANCES TO EMIGRATE,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 04468 041520Z

BUT IT HAD DONE NOTHING TO INCREASE THEM ONE OF THEM
OBSERVED THAT HE HAD EXPECTED THAT ONE OR TWO REFUSENIKS
MIGHT BE LET OUT IN ADVANCE OF THE SECRETARY' ARRIVAL
AS A GOOD-WILL GESTURE. AS FAR AS HE KNEW, NONE HAD
BEEN ALLOWED TO LEAVE AND THIS, HE THOUGHT, WAS A BAD
OMEN.

--DINA BAYLINE, A WELL-KNOWN AND LEVEL-HEADED
REFUSENIK, TOLD US THAT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL LET-DOWN OF
THE REFUSENIKS WAS HARDER BECAUSE THEY HAD ASSUMED-
ADMITTEDLY WITHOUT ANY EVIDENCE--THAT THERE "MUST" BE
POSITIVE RESULTS FROM THE FIRST VISIT OF A NEW SECRETARY
OF STATE TO THE USSR. SHE CAUTIONED THAT THE LET-DOWN
TENDEDD TO MAKE REFUSENIKS MORE DEPRESSED THAN THE FACTS
PERHAPS WARRANTED ALTHOUGH SHE TOO SAID THAT THE FUTURE
LOOKED LESS THAN HOPEFUL.

5. ANOTHER REASON FOR THE GENERAL DEPRESSION AMONG THE
REFUSENIKS CONCERNS THE FACT THAT PASSOVER IS BEGINNING.

AS ONE POINTED OUT, THIS IS A HOLIDAY THAT IS DEVOTED TO
CELEBRATING THE UNITY OF JEWS AND CONTAINS IN THE LITURGY
THE PHRASE "NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM". THE REFUSENIKS
REALIZE THAT THEY WILL IN FACT PROBABLY STILL BE HERE
NEXT YEAR AND THIS MAKES THEM DOUBLY SAD.
TOON

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